ECONOMIC GAIN THROUGH WASTE MINIMIZATION

One of the most attractive features of pollution prevention is the potential for "win-win" outcomes -- those where a facility can reduce pollution and simultaneously lower its own costs. This happened as a result of a lawsuit filed by EPA against the DuPont company's Chambers Works chemical plant in Deepwater, New Jersey -- one of the largest chemical manufacturing facilities in the United States.

As part of the 1991 settlement between DuPont and EPA, in addition to paying a substantial penalty for past RCRA violations, DuPont agreed to conduct an internal audit of their waste-generating activities and evaluate pollution prevention opportunities at the facility. In consultation with EPA, company officials identified 15 manufacturing processes with pollution prevention potential. The individual projects focused on reducing solvent wastes, tar wastes and other chemical wastes. One project even reduced packaging waste by introducing reusable chemical containers in place of disposable 55-gallon drums.

"The tremendous result of this study demonstrates the value of partnerships between industry and government", said Paul Tebo, Vice President, Safety, Health and the Environment, DuPont. *"As we face a more competitive global market, we must work together to solve environmental challenges."*

The outcome of the EPA/DuPont efforts is striking. By late 1993, seven of the 15 projects were implemented. DuPont has reduced wastes from the affected processes by 73 percent. Once all projects are in place, DuPont expects that wastes from all 15 processes will be cut roughly in half. More importantly, this waste reduction will yield benefits to the company as a result of reduced waste disposal and other regulatory costs. The total up-front investment for all 15 projects is expected to be about $6 million, while DuPont anticipates annual savings of about $15 million. Finally, the success realized at the Chambers Works facility may be relevant at other locations; therefore, DuPont is making the study publicly available as an example of how technological advances can be shared to further waste minimization progress.

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